The Centaurian Sentinel 5

Dedicated to J. Michael Straczynski's television series Babylon 5.

Data File 14 **BABYLON 5 EDITION** **October 1995**

THE RETURN OF PATRICIA TALLMAN

Conducted at the Magnum Opus Con-10, Callaway Gardens Resort in Pine Mountain, Georgia, July 14, 1995, by Tom Bateman.

Shortly after her impromptu autograph session, Patricia Tallman made time for this short interview to discuss Lyta Alexander and her return to BABYLON 5 in the second season episode "Divided Loyalties". Though we were unable to discuss the specific elements of her return show because the episode hadn't aired yet, we promise to do a follow up later this year. Ms. Tallman was very excited to do this interview and so we got right down to it. ★

The Centaurian Sentinel: It's been two years since fans last saw your character on BABYLON 5. How do you compare your work experience on the pilot with your return in "Divided Loyalties"?

Patricia Tallman: Well, on the pilot, I think I felt a little more green and unsure of myself, but I was also very excited. We had all these expectations about being on the pilot, and a series and all that. There was more of a feeling of camaraderie and building on something together, creating something together, creating a show, a feel, a series. Then on "Divided Loyalties", there was none of that. I just went in doing my character Lyta, feeling much more confident. I felt a little more alone, obviously, but it was a singular experience as opposed to working on something that was more ongoing.

Patricia Tallman, as Lyta Alexander – Babylon 5's first resident commercial telepath, returns to BABYLON 5 in the second season episode "Divided Loyalties".

CS: What was your first impression of the character of Lyta Alexander?

PT: Oh, I love Lyta. My very first impression . . . I had been given the script to look at for an audition, and I thought "I'll never get this part, it's too nice a part, they'll go for a star," that was my first impression. When I went to the audition, there was one other guy in the room and I had worked really hard on my "sides". Then this big tall guy comes running out and goes "Patricia Tallman, nice to meet you. I'm Joe Straczynski, I wrote this part for you, good luck," and ran out again. I just stood there with my mouth open going "What?!?"; and the other actor sitting there goes "Ah, not too much pressure or anything?"

CS: What was your initial reaction to being asked back to BABYLON 5?

PT: Ah, I was shocked, stunned, you know that. The weirdest thing is, in the back of my mind, it kinda felt right, in a way I felt like it was . . . meant to be.

CS: Did you expect to ever return to BABYLON 5 when it became a series without you?

PT: No, I had to let it go, deep down inside I let it go and so that was the hardest part. So that's why I never watched the show then; I did see part of it, part of an episode and I hated it because it was good; I was like "Oh no, this is the best!" But no, not in my foremind, I wouldn't let myself, maybe deep down inside I always hoped.

CS: Did JMS give you any indication that you might return?

PT: I do remember Joe saying something about "If it was up to me or if I have anything to say about it, you'll be back." Unfortunately, there was no consoling me at that point.

CS: Was the Lyta Alexander role in "Divided Loyalties" beyond what you might have expected for a return?

PT: I didn't really have any expectations of a return, because I didn't let myself think about that possibility. So to have a return and then get the script and say "Oh this is very nice, this is a big one"; I was pleased, I was very pleased.

CS: What's in the future for Lyta Alexander and Patricia Tallman?

PT: Well, I hope that Lyta's future takes a very active role in BABYLON 5 and I'd like to see Lyta, because of her relationship with Kosh, I hope that she'll be a "soldier of the light" and helps to battle the Shadows. I really want to see her in there, dealing with that, and using all of herself, which means not only her psi abilities, but her physical abilities to do so. As for Pat Tallman . . . I hope there's a lot more acting in my future, and I've got this beautiful son and this wonderful man in my life. So I'll be working on that, my family. Just finding what's next, and just being very optimistic.

Tom Bateman

JERRY DOYLE AND ANDREA THOMPSON VISIT THE UK – page 4

FARPOINT

FARPOINT, Hunt Valley, MD, October 6-8, 1995
Guests: Arne Starr, Mojo, Tim DeHaas, Robert Picardo, and John Fiedler.

It was my first visit to Hunt Valley, MD and I'm sure it won't be my last. This has been the site for many conventions – namely Shore Leave in August and FarPoint (formerly known as OctoberFest) in October. This year, there was an assortment of guests. While mainly a *Star Trek* gathering, there were some major components related to BABYLON 5.

Guests included: Robert Picardo and John Fiedler from Star *Trek: Voyager* and the original *Star Trek*, Arne Starr, Adam "Mojo" Liebwietz, Tim DeHaas, writer of B5 and *Star Trek* comic books.

First off, the B5 panel was lively and very well attended. Arne Starr, illustrator for many comic books and host of the Science Fiction Round Table on GEnie (General Electric Information Systems), had one of the very first sessions at FarPoint. His BIG bag of videos included clips from *Seven, Assassins*, *Desperado* and the latest B5 music video (which was absolutely eye-popping). Some new features included *Toy Story*, an animated movie featuring the voice of Tim Allen and *Goldeneye* – the new James Bond film. It was a fairly fast-moving hour of videos and it certainly looks like a very interesting film season ahead.

Early in the afternoon, Arne Starr hosted the phone-in session, solely on BABYLON 5. He had lined up Joe Straczynski, Richard Biggs and Jerry Doyle. JMS got the first call and was surprised at the number of people in the room (250-275). All sorts of questions were asked, covering the gamut of fan concerns for the program. Joe mentioned that the paperwork had finally been completed this week for the new B5 fan club and that we should hear more about that very soon. A Babylon 5 magazine is in the works as well. When asked about productions after the 5-year run of Babylon 5, Joe said that there was been discussion of sequels, but nothing has been written down. He threw out some wonderful possibilities – Sinclair's experiences before coming to Babylon 5; Sheridan before Babylon 5, Delenn before BABYLON 5, the Earth-Minbari War. These stories would fill in some of the history before the real story of Babylon 5.

Joe was asked whether or not there would be a resolution to the relationship between Jeffrey Sinclair and Catherine Sakai. Joe said that in the two-part episode coming up this season (now scheduled to shoot #15 and #16), we would see some of the changes in Jeffrey Sinclair's life with his assignment to Minbar and his organizing the Rangers to fight the Shadows. This story would provide the answer to this particular question. Joe said in this episode we would see Sinclair come to B5 as head of the Rangers and its the flip side of Babylon Squared.

Asked about upcoming merchandise available for BABYLON 5, Joe said that there is currently 4-5 companies with proposals for a CD-ROM Guide to BABYLON 5, but they are looking for a company that will provide good support. A screen saver will be out in about 4 weeks. When asked about other items, like an anatomically correct Londo doll, I got the impression that was a non-starter. He did say though, that the fan club will provide a vehicle for offering up some new items, i.e. patches, small items that have been used as props in the show. These items will be made by the same people that design the real items we see on BABYLON 5.

When asked where the show was going this season, Joe summarized by saying that the Rangers will be coming to the forefront of the story, we will learn more about Psi Corps and the Shadows, that episodes 8-10 will change the nature of the show and that more will happen in the first 10 episodes of this season than we have seen in the past two years.

With that, Joe signed off by thanking everyone for being at the convention and supporting the show.

Arne tried additional calls to cast members, but didn't get through to anyone. We were greatly surprised when he dialed up Michael O'Hare. When Arne introduced him, everyone really applauded and cheered. Despite an awful cold, Michael graciously talked with all of us, providing a few laughs as he tested the telephone connections with a few special sound effects. Several people asked Michael what he was working on. He said that he was taking a course in screenwriting, had recently returned from England where he spent 5.5 hours signing autographs, would attend Visions '95 in Chicago around Thanksgiving, had just finished some additional Volvo voice-overs (he has been doing Volvo commercials for about a year now) and was looking at a film script. He had no idea of what, if anything, would come of it though. As far as theatre was concerned, the season was just starting. He mentioned that he would be seeing Patrick Stewart in December in *The Tempest*. When asked about shooting the two-part episode for BABYLON 5, Michael said he thought it would happen sometime during the holiday season – Christmas/New Years, but had no idea of when it would air. On additional convention appearances,

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UPCOMING CONVENTIONS WITH BABYLON 5 PERSONNEL

Be aware that guest changes may occur due to last minute problems. ★

Con-Rad, October 27-29, Universal City Hilton & Towers, Universal City, CA. Bruce Boxleitner, Claudia Christian, Mira Furlan, Peter Jurasik, Bill Mumy, Patricia Tallman, J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, and Mojo are scheduled to appear. Contact: Con-Rad, P.O. Box 31892, Seattle, WA 98103; 206/745-2700; cpl@rain.org.

Visions '95, November 23-26, Chicago, IL. Michael O'Hare and Mira Furlan are scheduled to appear. Contact: Her Majesty's Entertainment, P.O. Box 1202, Highland Park, IL 60035-1202; 708/405-9461.

LOSCON 22, November 24-26, Airport Hilton, Burbank, CA. UNCONFIRMED appearance, but it's quite likely that JMS will be there. For more information: LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA 91601; tel.: 818/760-9234. E-mail: Rbourget@aol.com.

RebelCon, July 5-7, 1996, Taunton, MA. Michael O'Hare is scheduled to appear. Contact: World's End Productions, 10 Rankin Street, Worchester, MA 01605.

The Centaurian Sentinel

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***Editor/Publisher* • Michael Zmuda** m.zmuda@genie.geis.com
***Senior Editor* • Sandra Bruckner** bruckner@usia.gov
***Associate Editor* • Tom Bateman**
***Media Technowizard* • Mark Marmor**

The Centaurian Sentinel is a newsletter dedicated to J. Michael Straczynski's television series BABYLON 5, and a forum for all beings who appreciate Science Fiction. It is sanctioned by J. Michael Straczynski.

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Membership includes: 12 monthly newsletters; a membership card; a free listing in The Zocalo Exchange section (20 words or less). All members also have an opportunity to have their BABYLON 5 related artwork and articles (no stories please) published in ***The Centaurian Sentinel***. Annual dues are $12 for U.S. and Canadian memberships, and $24 for overseas memberships. Please make U.S. funds payable to Michael Zmuda. For newsletter information or for submissions contact: ***The Centaurian Sentinel***, c/o Michael Zmuda, 17 Orchard Road, Putnam Valley, NY 10579-3040; m.zmuda.genie.geis.com Please include a SASE if you would like your material returned. "Listen to the music, not the song." ★

THAT WHICH CANNOT BE NAMED

A brief history of BABYLON 5's creation

Before there was BABYLON 5, J. Michael Straczynski, disturbed with the current state of sci-fi shows, presented himself with a problem – how do you create a good adult television sci-fi drama unlike anything else on television, and under budget? He was included in the growing number of sci-fi fans who were annoyed at the lack of good stories that contained real physics and attention to detail in the genre. Somewhere between

BABYLON 5's first logo, created by Peter Ledger.

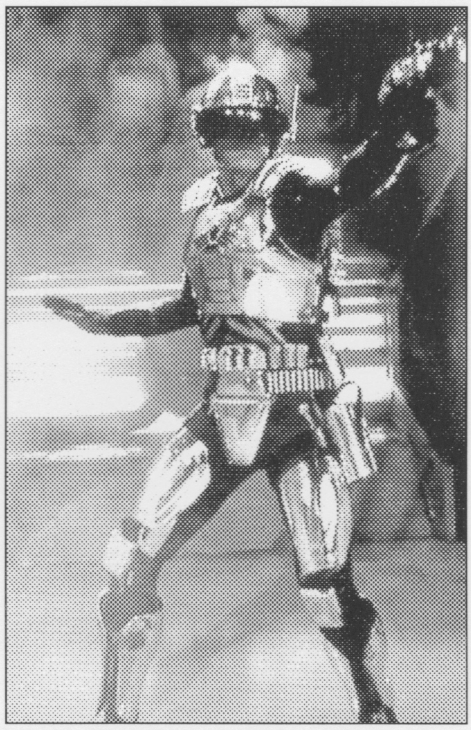
his involvement with *Captain Power & the Soldiers of Fortune* and the syndicated version of *The Twilight Zone* he came up with the concept for BABYLON 5. It was to become an answer to the above question, and more – the series would have to present individual stories layered upon an overall larger story. JMS contacted Doug Netter, who was producer of *Captain Power*, and formed a partnership with him to get the show produced.

JMS started the creative process back in 1986 when he had created his first drafts and notes. By the following summer he had finished the series' treatment and writer's bible. By May 1988 he had hired Peter Ledger, who had done much design work for the *Ice Pirates* movie, to design a logo for the new series and create a series of paintings for use at presentations. During the summer of 1988 JMS pitched the show to ABC, CBS, and HBO, without any luck.

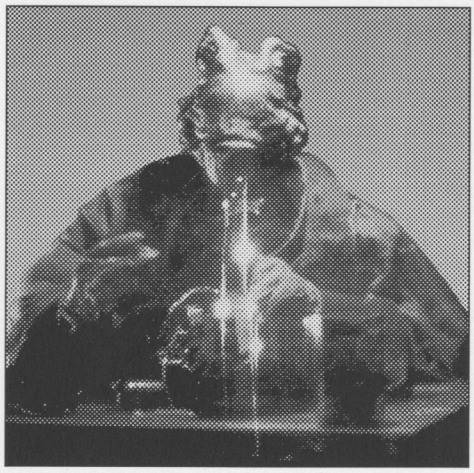
In March 1989 he brought his dream to Chris-Craft Television, a consortium of television stations, who pledged support of B5. Attempts were made to create co-production deals with foreign investors in Europe and Japan. In the summer of 1989 the series was then pitched to Paramount, again with no luck. But by the the end of that year Warner Bros., who was currently working with Chris-Craft on forming a fifth network, also pledged their support.

In November 1991 Warner Bros. announced that B5 would be one of the three flagship projects for their Prime Time Entertainment Network (PTEN). The secret project, which until this time was known to sci-fi fans only as "that which cannot be named", was finally introduced to the public as BABYLON 5. The first focus group for the project was held on December 13, 1991.

By early summer 1992 the casting for the B5 pilot, "The Gathering", was done. Originally Doug and JMS thought of possibly doing two television movies before the series started, with the ideas of reusing the majority of built sets for the series, and to hit the viewers with a big story which was more of an event, rather then a series pilot. Additional veterans of *Captain Power* were reunited to help out in the project; John Copeland, who was line producer, writers Larry DiTillio and Marc Scott Zicree, and computer effects expert Ron Thornton. The filming began



In the 1988 series *Captain Power & the Soldiers of Fortune*, Major Michael "Tank" Ellis made the first reference to BABYLON 5. Unfortunately the series didn't have much of a future and never completed a second season.



One of Babylon 5's early denizens – probably the first bar fly to frequent Happy Daze.

on August 10 and was completed by September 4. On November 7, 1992 an audience at Wishcon II, in Springfield, MA, was treated to the first public viewing of the pilot movie. The first announced showing of the pilot followed at Loscon 19, in Los Angles, CA, on November 28.

The final edit of the pilot took place on January 14, 1993, and on February 19 and 20 the satellite feed of the movie achieved a 10.3 GAA national rating. Preproduction of the series started that April, and by May 28 Warner Bros. made a formal announcement of a series order. Filming of the series began by mid May. During that summer the first three episodes were previewed at San Diego Comic Con, WorldCon, and CopperCon. That September Foundation imaging was awarded an Emmy for visual-effects in the pilot movie. By mid October the first fully completed episode was delivered to Warner Bros. PTEN rebroadcasted the pilot that fall. On November 20, attendees at LosCon 20 were treated to a preview of "Midnight on the Firing Line".

During January 1994 Walter Koenig hosted "The Making of BABYLON 5", which is shown on the cable station E!. The satellite feed of the first episode is transmitted on January 20, and the first PTEN viewing took place on January 26. The rest is history! ✯

Michael Zmuda

JERRY AND ANDREA VISIT THE UK

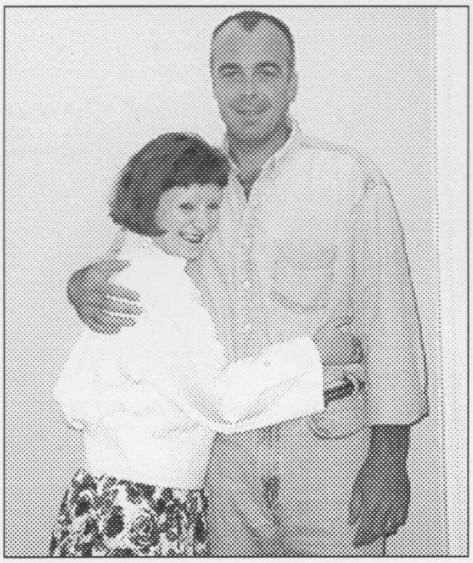
The Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin, Ireland, 26-27 August & The Colston Hall, Bristol, England, 2-3 September.
Guests: Denise Crosby, Jerry Doyle, Dean Stockwell, and Andrea Thompson.

Having experienced a great time at BABCON '95 in Birmingham, I was doubly looking forward to these two weekends, because it was my first opportunity to meet my favourite actor in the universe – Jerry Doyle.

All the guests were witty, entertaining and sociable, but in my biased opinion, Jerry Doyle eclipsed them all. His appearances got very enthusiastic receptions, and he immediately established a warm rapport with the audience. He invited questions from the assembled crowd, and, at his first appearance in Dublin, I was determined to be the first to ask a question, something I'd never done before. In fact, once I got hold of the microphone, I asked three questions in a row, so there was no stopping me! My first question was does Jerry ever get fed up being compared to Bruce Willis? Jerry answered not really, but he would dearly like to earn to kind of that Bruce can command. When I said that I thought Jerry was better than Bruce, the audience applauded in agreement, and Jerry jokingly rummaged around in his jeans pocket about to pull out some money, as if to pay me for saying that! My second question was, what's Jerry's favourite BABYLON 5 episode? He had a prepared answer to a frequently asked question at conventions, and everyone loved his witty response, "second season, first episode, one scene, in a coma, no lines, full salary!!!" I tried to catch him out with my third question, what's Jerry's second favorite episode? That threw him for a loop! He had to stop and think about that one! He mentioned "Survivors' (my all time favorite), and "The Long Dark", which guest starred Dwight Schultz, whom Jerry enjoyed working with.

With every question, Jerry's replies were amusing and intelligent. When asked who was the better commander, Michael O'Hare or Bruce Boxleitner, Jerry responded "Me!!", and he gave a hilarious response to the subject of Garibaldi's love of Warner Bros.' cartoons. He wished Wylie Coyote would, after forty odd years of chasing it, finally catch the Road Runner, kill it, cook it, and eat it!!! I'll never view Road Runner in the same light again after his comments. Another interesting question was would Jerry like to travel into space. He said no, because he's afraid he'd never make it back to earth again. He threw the question back at the audience, and a show of hands revealed an overwhelming amount would welcome the opportunity to travel in space, including me. Jerry then joked that all those people should make him the main beneficiary in their wills! Jerry was questioned about the finale of season two, and what Garibaldi would imagine Kosh's identity to be. Jerry's response – thousands of CD's flying through the air as he compare Kosh to a juke box.

Saturday August 26 will remain very special to me, because I got the chance to go back stage and meet the man in person – this is the privilege one get for running Jerry Doyle's UK fan club. I know initially both Jerry and Michael O'Hare were unsure about having fan clubs in their name. I don't think they understand why anyone would want to set up a fan club solely for them, but once persuaded, they have been very receptive towards the idea. I don't know what Richard Biggs initially felt about his fan club.



Fans, like Caroline Griffin, made it hard for Jerry Doyle to leave the UK – he and Andrea Thompson flew in from the US two weekends in a row to make appearances at conventions.

My first impression of Jerry was that he was much taller than I had ever imagined – 6' 3", and I am no taller than 5' 6". I rarely wear high heeled shoes, so he towered over me. He is much more handsome in the flesh than on any of those television close-ups in B5. Andrea was just about to step onto the stage for her session and Denise Crosby had done her spot for the day and had left for the afternoon. Dean stockwell from *Quantum Leap* was there, and it was a thrill to meet him – Jerry actually introduced me to him.

Jerry surpassed himself at Bristol. Forget about taking questions whilst on stage, both he and Andrea came out into the audience and mingled, showing that they view fans as equals, and were very receptive. Although they spoke about their bad experiences of over zealous people who become fans from hell, thankfully the majority are not like that. At one point, there was a male member of the audience sitting on an end seat of the centre aisle. He was taking lots of photographs, and Jerry sat beside him and started searching his plastic bag. He had a sneak look at the photographs this man had bought at the dealers' stalls, and then took out a packet of Jaffa Cakes (which for the benefit of US friends, are a popular brand of chocolate and orange biscuits/cookies)!! Jerry also delighted us all by bringing with him the two blooper reels of B5 outtakes that had gone down such a treat at Birmingham. He also spoke at length about his responsibility as an actor and a human being. If there was a line in the script that could be interpreted as sexist or racist, he refused to say it, and he objected to striking a woman. This is something that I admire, because although Jerry would consider himself a working actor, he has been given worldwide exposure being a major player on B5. People of all ages and all walks of life become attached because they can relate to their characters so deeply, and because they enter the private sphere of the home through the powerful medium of television. People of such prominence as Jerry are role models, especially for young people. I know from my own childhood that Spock from *Star Trek* was a very powerful role model for me. It was my own childhood dream to a a scientist like him, and he encouraged me to read every book that I could lay my hands on. I've heard too many people in Jerry's position justify their horrendously violent actions on television and in movies by declaring that it is not their responsibility, they say, it's only a movie, it's only television – but it's more than that. People do believe what they see, they are influenced by it, especially visual images which do have a great deal of impact. The likes of Jerry have massive media exposure, so responsibility is important, because they are role models.

A really great time was being had by everyone, the guests, the audience and the organisers who had made such a fine job of presenting these conventions. On the Saturday night, we had a fan club get together. Although our guest of honour couldn't make it due to a change of plan at the last minute, we were up until about 1:00 am having a good time, and mingling with not just B5 fans, but we had Trekkies and Quantum Leapers there too. On the Sunday, Jerry kindly met with me and some members of his fan club during the lunch hour. We were given a private room, and had a lovely opportunity to be with him for about 40 minutes or so.

After waiting in anticipation for many months for Jerry's visit, the two weekends flew by really quickly. Everyone had a wonderful time, and I wouldn't have missed Jerry's appearance for the world. I wish for frequent return visits to the British Isles by any of the cast involved in BABYLON 5. They will always be assured of a warm welcome. ✯

Caroline Griffin

Garibaldi's Security Squad is a sanctioned fan club for Jerry Doyle. Membership includes a newsletter which is published three times a year and a membership card. Membership is currently free, but contributions will be taken. For more information contact Garibaldi's Security Squad, c/o Caroline Griffin, 54 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 7DF, England.

SUMMER SCI-FI EXPERIENCE

The Colston Hall, Bristol, England, 2-3 September.
Guests: Denise Crosby, Jerry Doyle, Dean Stockwell, and Andrea Thompson.

A city of contrasts, horrendous 1960's concrete creations and the most wonderful Georgian buildings overlooked by the world famous Clifton suspension bridge topped by rolling parklands. This is Bristol, an ancient city playing host to the Summer Sci-FI Experience. The Colston Hall is a majestic building that I'm sure to few fans paid real attention to, as we were all intent on seeing our heroes, Dean Stockwell (*Quantum Leap*), Denise Crosby (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*), and of course my favorites Jerry Doyle and Andrea Thompson (BABYLON 5).

Jerry and Andrea were a marvellous double act, full of sexual innuendo and sharp one liners, making us laugh and gasp with excitement as they answered our questions, telling us what we wanted to hear, yet all the while showing their affection for each other. Having the two of them on stage together gave us a double helping and being unexpected it was a real bonus. Both stars showed great humour and interacted with the audience in a way that we could only have dreamed of. They came across as very genuine people, the kind you would love to spend a good night out with.

Now for our *Trek* friends, Denise Crosby had an attractive personality with a wicked sense of humour that came across as she described backstage goings on at Paramount. I gained the impression that she regretted leaving *Star Trek* and would love to find a way back to the series.

Dean Stockwell of *Quantum Leap* fame is a highly respected actor with a long and varied career behind him. I felt at times he was a little bemused by his personal popularity and wasn't quite sure what to make of the real enthusiasm of his fans. He did his best to answer our questions courteously and with humour, but it seemed to me that the wrong questions were being asked. This is a man who started as a child actor and has been in show business for over fifty years, I wish I had known more about him so that I could have asked more intelligent questions.

The dealer room was packed but still not enough BABYLON 5 merchandise was to be seen, no baseball caps, and even worse . . . no T-shirts. It was really good to see the American dealers here as they give a different flavour to the buying and selling area.

A big thank you is due to Caroline Griffin for organising a fan club (*Garibaldi's Security Squad*) visit with Jerry Doyle. It made the weekend for everyone who attended. Thanks are also due to Jerry for giving up his time to meet with us as well.

Well I have taken so many photos now that my local drugstore is thinking of giving me shares in its film and development section, but I haven't finished just yet – The Gathering at Manchester is just around the corner. ✯

Fran McStay

FARPOINT

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Michael said he didn't have anything scheduled, but would be more than willing to talk to anyone organizing an event.

This was a very fast hour session and soon everyone had to say goodbye to Michael. It was good hearing from him and Joe about BABYLON 5. This was the first phone-in session I'd ever participated in and I hope more conventions adopt this method of involving people when their schedules do not permit them to attend in person.

We had seen Mojo walking around the convention hotel all day and I couldn't wait for his presentation. He's very enthusiastic about his work and it was apparent when he bounced up on the stage. He just couldn't wait to show us some of the magic he and the other creative geniuses at Foundation Imaging have been working on. What a bag of tricks he brought with him!

First, Mojo answered a few questions. About season three, Mojo said, "Oh My God! It's going to be so COOL!" He wasn't about to give anything important away, but he did mention that PTEN recently had uncoupled the showing of B5 and *Kung Fu*. This has given stations more flexibility in scheduling the show and they hope it will get better time slots for B5. Many stations are now putting B5 either before or after Deep Space Nine.

Ron Thornton is doing a series called *Hypernauts*, a Saturday-morning show that is absolutely first-rate. Given the budget, its unreal what they are doing. Many of the people working on B5 special effects also work on *Hypernauts* and the show will air on ABC in the fall of '96. Mojo described it as having *Dr. Who* quality scripts and B5 quality special effects. This is definitely one show to watch. He showed some clips from B5, featuring some old and new effects, and had one portion that showed how scenes are layered together.

One of the final sequences Mojo showed was a film competition winner. It showed King Kong under attack by *Star Wars* fighters.

Mojo talked a little about doing animation for the show. They use Video Toasters on Amiga computers with a software package called Lightwave 3D. He said the industry is exploding and all companies are looking for people in the field.

This really was a very fast hour and Mojo ended his session by auctioning a B5 baseball shirt for charity. It went for $126.

There were several other panels that had small B5 components. The panel on the Internet was especially interesting. Its always great to get folks in a room and see what they find interesting about cyberspace. The panel on fanzines was thought-provoking as well. Several people there felt the Internet was actually detrimental to fanzines. Since there are listservs, mailing lists, etc. where people exchange original works, fanzines have declined dramatically. This was further evidenced by the small number of fanzines on display at the convention.

One of the hottest items at FarPoint – B5 trading cards. You could get a set for $15 on Saturday. There were none to be found on Sunday. Special cards ranged in price and I completed my regular set for 40 cents. The overall quality of the merchandise was really very good. The artwork was outstanding and the costumes were very well done.

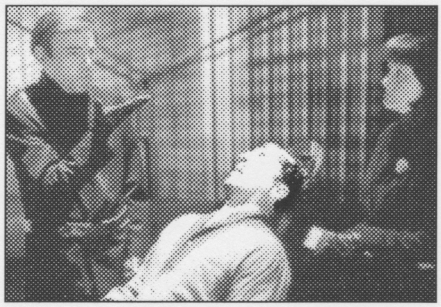
This was a very well organized convention. The autograph lines were orderly and everyone had the opportunity to get items signed. The sessions were spaced very well and the hotel was a good site. Everything was very handy. All in all, a very enjoyable experience. ✯

Sandra Bruckner

BABYLON 5 EPISODES

A Race Through Dark Places (#207)

On Mars, a man sits strapped in a chair and is being interrogated by Bester and another Psi Cop. Bester demands to know about an underground network that is spiriting unregistered telepaths away from Psi Corps. During an intensive mind probe the prisoner dies, but Bester is untroubled. He has discovered the hub of underground activity – Babylon 5.



Bester, who has just performed an mind scan on a rogue telepath, holds the answer to where the underground network is being run from.

In Earhart's, Babylon 5's officer bar, Captain John Sheridan expresses to Dr. Stephen Franklin his irritation about a B5 advisory directive, ordering both him and Susan Ivanova to pay rent for their larger quarters. His attitude changes when he meets Delenn, who asks to spend time with him in an unofficial setting to learn more about human social interaction. He is bemused as she asks him to dinner.

Bester arrives on Babylon 5, and proceeds to brief the command staff on the underground railroad situation. Sheridan Michael Garibaldi reluctantly agrees to help Bester, while Ivanova advises the captain to review Bester's file, particularly his last visit to Babylon 5, and who he is dealing with.

Talia Winters and Bester are walking in the Zocalo, discussing the unfortunate circumstances of their last encounter. Suddenly, Bester senses a hostile thought directed at him, crying "Murderer." He is positive that the rogue telepaths are here. Meanwhile, in an area down below, a man warns a group of people that Bester has arrived. Now they realize that they may have to kill him.

At the Fresh Aire restaurant, Sheridan meets Delenn, who comes dressed in a beautiful black gown. As they look over the menu, other patrons peer over curiously at them.

In Earhart's, Garibaldi confronts Ivanova about the underground railroad. Despite her contempt for Psi Corps., she knows nothing about the operation.

Bester invites Talia to breakfast. She then remembers their encounter with Jason Ironheart, whose mental powers transformed him into a new entity. She also remembers the 'gift' he bestowed on her before disappearing, a gift she still cannot fully comprehend. Meanwhile, the runaway telepaths prepare weapons and perform mental drills to keep Bester from probing them.

Sheridan arrives at his quarters to find them locked. Refusing to bow to pressure, he and Ivanova sleep in his office instead.

The next morning, as Bester and Talia are discussing President Santiago's death, he senses an attack moments before it happens. He kills two of the rogue telepaths, but in the confusion Talia is drugged unconscious and taken as a hostage.

Bester and the others begin to search. Dr. Franklin approaches Captain Sheridan and explains that the underground is holding Talia, but will not harm her; they only request a meeting alone with Sheridan.

Talia wakes up surrounded by the runaway telepaths, who share with her stories of incredible atrocities committed by Psi Corps. against its own.

Garibaldi identifies the dead telepaths, tracking them to an area down below. Reluctantly, he gives this information to Bester. Meanwhile, Sheridan is met by Dr. Franklin, who reveals that he is responsible for the underground network. Talia comes forward, convinced that the stories are true. Sheridan, torn by both his sense of duty and compassion, can only warn them that Bester is on his way.

When the Psi Cop arrives down below, he is met by the telepaths, including Talia. He unsuccessfully tries to persuade them to surrender, but they lock hands to combine their telepathic power. Suddenly, it seems that they cannot combat Bester's P-12 ability. Talia breaks away, and along with Bester, ambush the rogues with PPGs – killing all of them. Satisfied, Bester leaves to make a clean getaway.

Sheridan and Franklin emerge from hiding to find Ms. Winters and the others still united. With their combined powers, they were able to override Bester and project a false image into his consciousness, where Talia betrayed the underground. Sheridan is assured that the underground railroad will be closed down at Babylon 5 from now on. Talia warns both of them not to associate with Bester before he leaves, and that she will handle it.

As Bester heads for his departing shuttlecraft, he thanks Talia for her cooperation, and asks that she keep an eye on the command staff. She agrees and bids him goodbye. He looks back at her with a somewhat puzzled expression, perhaps sensing something, then leaves. Talia looks on, then goes about her business.

Sheridan has allocated part of the defense budget to pay for the extra rent, and Ivanova relaxes in her quarters. Talia enters with wine. She offers to build a friendship, and after a moment's hesitation, Ivanova invites her in, and they talk.

Telepath #1 was played by Apesjanahkwat, Rick by Brian Cousins, Telepath by Diane DiLascio, Lurker by Gianin Loffe, Man by Eddie Allen, Bartender by Kathryn Cressida, Shooter by Christopher Michael, Psi Cop by Judy Levitt, and Jason Ironheart by William Allen Young. "A Race Through Dark Places" was written by J. Michael Straczynski, directed by Jim Johnston, and produced by John Copeland.

The Coming of Shadows (#209)

On Centauri Prime, Emperor Turhan is preparing to make an official visit to Babylon 5. Dismissing protests from his Prime Minister, concerning his health, he is determined to go alone.

Meanwhile, Ambassador G'Kar argues vociferously against allowing the visit, but Captain Sheridan is firm in his position. He urges G'Kar not to do anything regrettable. "It's too late for that, Captain. Too late by far," the Narn ambassador replies.

A visitor arrives on the station. He passes his identicard to a security checkpoint who offers assistance, but the visitor declines after noticing Garibaldi and continues on his way.

Refa explains to Londo that with the emperor's demise expected soon, several factions are moving to seize power. Refa then alludes to his own plans, the gist of which leaves both Londo and Vir uncomfortable.

The emperor arrives on B5 to a warm greeting from Captain Sheridan and his staff. Afterwards, he asks Dr. Franklin about Ambassador Kosh, hoping that he might be able to meet the Vorlon.

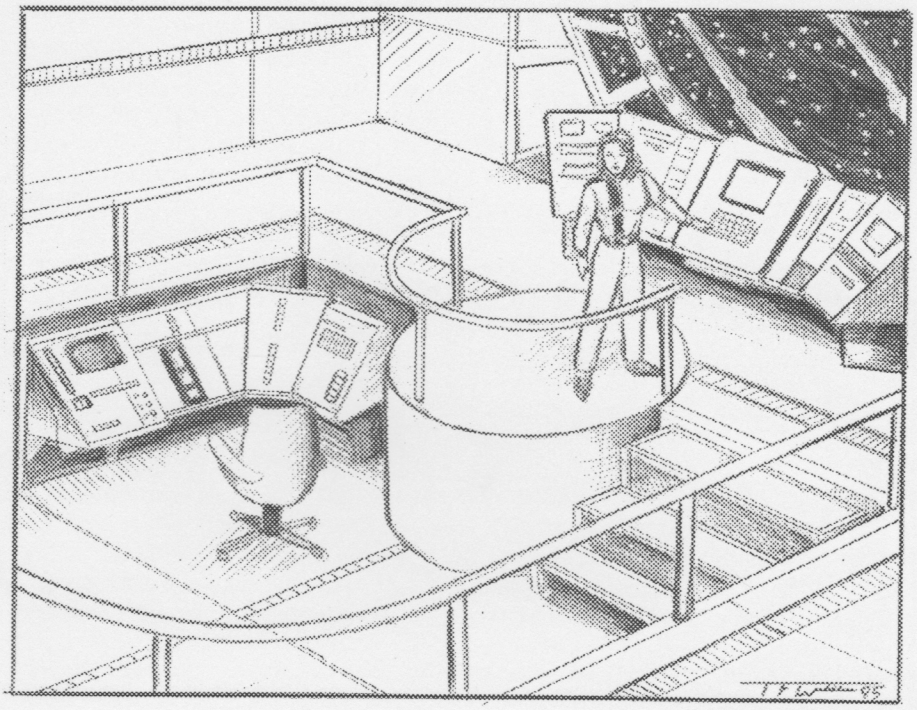
G'Kar is conversing with Kha'Mak, who reports that the Kha'Ri has endorsed the ambassador's plan to assassinate the Centauri leader at the official reception. G'Kar comments that every event of his life has prepared him for what he must now do.

In the observation dome, Sheridan meets with the Emperor, who reflects on his life, one filled with many regrets. "But there is still time to seize that one, last, fragile moment to choose something better. . . . And I intend to do just that," he muses.

In his quarters, G'Kar prepares a final testament before arriving at the reception. He offers Sheridan no promises, but that he will listen to what the emperor has to say.

As security seals off corridor space, Garibaldi confronts the visitor who has been following him. The stranger asks to speak with him, but not in front of others. Garibaldi orders him to be locked up. In another corridor the emperor, while proceeding to the reception, is seized by sudden pain and collapses.

When alerted, Dr. Franklin acts quickly, rushing the emperor to medlab. Knowing that his life is slipping away, the Centauri leader asks the doctor to deliver a message to Ambassador G'Kar.



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News of the emperor's condition has reached Centauri Prime. Refa needs a demonstration of power to rise above the others. Londo, remembering Morden's offer, suggests that they reclaim a former Centauri outpost in Quadrant 14, now a Narn colony. After Refa leaves, Vir begs Londo not to use Morden and his "Associates", but Londo is resigned to the chosen path.

Meanwhile, G'Kar is fuming in his quarters, irritated that the emperor would start dying before he could strike. He composes himself just enough as Dr. Franklin enters. He is stunned as the doctor delivers the message, an apology from the emperor for the tyranny caused by the Centauri occupation of the Narn homeworld.

Londo dreams of war with the Narn, of a great hand reaching out of the stars, of Shadows flying overhead, being crowned emperor, and many years later, G'Kar and Londo strangling each other. . . . Suddenly he awakens, realizing the attack has begun.

At Quadrant 12, three Shadow warships materialize suddenly and attack the orbiting space station. The Narn fighter ships are no match for their attackers' awesome firepower, and are destroyed quickly. The Shadows proceed to obliterate the colony from orbit before disappearing into hyperspace.

Londo informs Refa that the Centauri can now move in on Quadrant 14. As Refa departs, Mollari is cornered by G'Kar, who sets him down to toast the health of the Centauri emperor, hopeful that perhaps a new era of understanding has begun. Londo accepts reluctantly, knowing that only the opposite will be true.

A Centauri expedition arrives at Quadrant 14, where they are attacked by a returning Narn fighter squadron.

Garibaldi finally allows the visitor to see him. The visitor presents a data crystal, containing a message. Garibaldi is stunned to see his friend Ambassador Jeffrey Sinclair, who informs him that he has more responsibilities then simply being Earth's ambassador to Minbar. He speaks of a coming darkness, and of a group of Minbari and humans, known as Rangers, who are now working together to prepare for the fight ahead.

G'Kar listens as Kha'Mak relays the reports from Quadrant 14. Enraged, G'Kar cannot believe that he had stretched out his hand in friendship to Londo only hours before.

Sinclair asks Garibaldi to extend any cooperation the Rangers would require. He cannot say any more, only a warning to watch out for the Shadows. . . . "They move, when you're not looking at them."

Security scrambles as G'Kar screams for Mollari. He is then confronted by Sheridan, who orders him back to his quarters. Though furious and despondent, G'Kar relents.

In medlab, the emperor is resting. Moments later, a figure stands over his bed. It is Ambassador Kosh. The emperor asks, "How will this end?" to which the Vorlon replies, "In fire."

Garibaldi tells both Sheridan and Ivanova of the information he has learned, but declines to reveal the source. Sheridan hopes he can use the information as leverage in the tenuous situation.

Londo and Refa inform the emperor of the great victory in Quadrant 14. The emperor beckons for Londo to come close, and he whispers his last words before passing away. Londo says that the emperor gave him a final blessing, but later reveals to Refa that the emperor's true last words were "You are both damned."

At the Babylon 5 advisory council meeting, Sheridan announces that Earth Alliance observers will be sent to monitor Quadrant 14, despite Londo's protests. G'Kar informs them that the Narn have now officially declared war against the Centauri Republic.

In the ambassador's quarters, Refa explains that his allies now control the throne. Vir wonders why Londo doesn't pursue the throne himself. Londo, remembering the dream, explains that he would rather be kingmaker than king.

Garibaldi escorts the Ranger and asks to be appraised of any information he comes across, and in return, he'll keep their presence a secret. He also asks if there is anyone else who knows their presence, to which the Ranger replies, "Just one other."

Ambassador Delenn ponders a data crystal, then activates it. "Hello, old friend . . .", says the familiar voice of Sinclair.

The Ranger was played by Fredric Lehne, the Centauri Emperor by Turhan Bayas, the Centauri Prime Minister by Malachi Throne, Kha'Mak by Neil Bradley, Narn pilot #1by Kim Strauss, Narn pilot #2 by Jonathan Chapman, and the custom guard by Bryan Michael. "The Coming of Shadows" was written by J. Michael Straczynski, directed by Janet Greek, and produced by John Copeland.

summaries by **Dennis Bateman**

GOLD CHANNEL

Realities

". . . No one here is exactly what he appears . . ."
"Mind War"

No one on Babylon 5 is precisely what he seems.
G'Kar is not. We cannot guess his dreams.
There are no "holes" within his mind –
his hauntings are a different kind.
The knowledge he has long possessed keeps him awake.
He can not rest.
He reads the writings of G'Quan and rises weary in the dawn,
refuses to relinquish hope and tries to find a way
to cope with Shadows hiding in the walls.
Centauri spies that walk the halls –
suppresses a fierce urge to rant at Fate,
that treats him like . . . an "ant."

L. G. Merkel, Palmer, MA

I would like to share a similar experience with regard to B5 that I've read that others have also expressed. When the advertisements came out for B5's pilot episode, my first reaction was that this was slated as another network's response to the upcoming series, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. When I watched the pilot, I found it to be quite interesting, but I had no idea how it was going to develop as a series. In fact, my concept of "develop as a series" was misguided by other sci-fi series which up to this point did not, as I'm aware, develop at all.

B5 is the first such series that employs true character and plot development, meaning things change. For example, the Centauri race, at first, seemed to be a noble and peaceful people. However, the perception of them has developed into a cut throat aggressive race who condone violence in the name of glory for the republic. Another fine character development involves Andrea Thompson's character, Talia Winters. At first, we see her as being completely loyal and trustworthy to the Psi Corps. However, we have witnessed through multiple story plots how her feelings have completely turned around with regard to Psi Corps. In addition, her relationship with Claudia Christian's character, Susan Ivanova has developed from being rejected by Winters to becoming a close friend.

B5 is more than just a good sci-fi series, J. Michael Straczynski is unfolding a complete story through this series. Unlike other sci-fi series, at the end of a B5 episode, there are situations or characters that have undergone permanent changes. These are part of the unfolding of the five year story.

In addition, I support the premise that after five years, the series will end. To attempt to stretch out the plot would, I believe, compromise the quality of the production. I base this statement on the knowledge that each episode currently unfolds a portion of the five year plot. If someone attempted to lengthen the run of the series, that would mean that we would not see the same level of character and plot development each week. JMS has designed the ideal balance with regard to developments in the B5 series (each episode is packed!).

This does not mean that after B5's five year run, we should be content to live without the quality of programming which B5 gives to the television medium. There are possibilities to explore with regard to new series concepts. If JMS can create and develop B5, then what other story concepts would he be interested in doing. There could be a spin-off series from B5, or a completely new series with new characters and plot lines. I believe the current sci-fi audience has matured enough to examine new material with an open mind as to the quality of the production. I believe we no longer rate a new series on how well it compares with something we already like.

Vern Hartsock, Baltimore, MD

TRANSMISSIONS

Next month, November, is a Sweeps Month. In the television industry it is one of the months that decides the fate of the future of television shows through ratings. Though BABYLON 5 has been renewed for its third season the ratings from this period will help decide the future for its fourth season. Since B5 is a syndicated series it has been bumped from the fall schedule in some areas in favor of new shows. In the New York City viewing area many fans are worried that the superstation WWOR will not be renewing B5 for a fourth season. According to WWOR they will not be deciding its future until next July, and since NYC is the second largest market in the US many smaller stations may be looking to them and follow their decision. It is important that you voice your support to your local affiliate that airs B5 through typing or writing them a short and polite letter (they work better than e-mail or phone calls). You may contact WWOR's Director of Programming at the following address: Ms. Leslie Glenn, Director of Programming, UPN WWOR, 9 Broadcast Plaza, Secaucus, NJ 07096. The address for WWOR's parent company is: Ms. Laurey Barnett, Director of Programming, United Television, 132 Rodeo Drive, Fourth Floor, Beverly Hills, CA 90210-2425.

Congratulations to Bruce Boxleitner and Melissa Gilbert on the arrival of their son Michael (Mikey) Garret. Michael, who was named in memory of Michael Landon, arrived 2 ½ months premature on October 6.

J. Michael Straczynski has invited Majel Barrett Roddenberry to guest in the B5 episode "Point of No Return." JMS wrote the part of Lady Morella, the third wife of Emperor Turhan, with her in mind.

Bruce Ritter of Uncomyn Gifts asked us to pass on the following warning to anyone who purchases a box of B5 trading cards. One of Bruce's customers had commented that he had ordered a box of cards from another dealer, which arrived without the shrink wrap. When the card packs were opened and the cards were sorted they noticed that there was an abnormally low count of chase cards. It is possible that the box was stripped of packs which contained chase cards. The hologram chase cards are currently valued at $11.00+ each, so this practice would be profitable to a lowly dealer. Bruce advises that if you order a box, and it does not come with the factory shrink wrap, return it without opening any packs and demand your money back. "Also, buy card packs and boxes from known reputable dealers to insure that packs have not been stripped." ★ **Mykl**

THE ZOCALO EXCHANGE

WANTED

You've heard of penpals, I'm looking for "story pals". Send me your BABYLON 5 story and I will send you mine. Elaine Davidson, 3251 Anvil Place, Greensboro, NC 27407.

Wanted: Bruce Boxleitner pen pals. Contact Boots Breza, 203 E. 5th Street, Solon, IA 52333-9256.

I am interested in exchanging letters with other BABYLON 5 fans (who are also not on the net) to discuss the show. Deanna Susans, 162 Church End Lane, Runwell, Wickford, Essex, SS11 7DN England.

MERCHANDISE

TV & SCI-FI COLLECTIBLES for sale. Magazines, toys. Catalog $2. Tresh, Box 47043CS, 2638 Innes, Gloucester, Ontario, K1B-5B0 Canada.